

Message Text

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ORIGIN PM-04

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 PRS-01 L-03 OES-03 NSC-05

SS-15 SP-02 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 /059 R

DRAFTED BY:OASD/ISA/FMRA:SGOLDSMITH PM/ISO:RWMASSEN

APPROVED BY:PM/ISO:JWKIMBALL

AF/S:FCRUMP

AF/I:COL FWIRKUS

S/PRS:RFUNSETH

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R 292007Z DEC 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

INFO AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY BONN

OASD WASHDC/ISA/FMRA

USDAO BONN GERMANY

SAF WASHDC/OI

AFSC ANDREWS AFB MD/DOSF

AFETR PATRICK AFB FL/RUOO

NASA WASHDC/TN

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 303666

E.O. 11652: ADS-UNCLAS UPON COMPLETION OF NEGOTIATIONS

TAGS: MARR, SF, MP, LT,WZ, GE

SUBJECT: PRESS GUIDANCE CONCERNING HELIOS-B PROGRAM

REF: STATE 287011

1. DEPARTMENT IS CONCERNED THAT PRESENCE OF USAF AIRCRAFT
AT JOHANNESBURG NOT LEAD TO ALLEGATIONS OF MILITARY
COOPERATION WITH SOUTH AFRICA IN ANGOLA. WITH THIS
OBJECTIVE IN MIND, POST MAY DRAW UPON

THE FOLLOWING PRESS MATERIAL

TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS WHICH MIGHT SUBSEQUENTLY ARISE.

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2. TWO ADVANCED RANGE INSTRUMENTATION AIRCRAFT (ARIA) WILL STAGE FROM JAN SMUTS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT TO SUPPORT THE JOINT UNITED STATES-WEST GERMAN HELIOS-B-SPACECRAFT TO BE LAUNCHED INTO SOLAR ORBIT FOR U.S. NASA FROM CAPE CANAVERAL AIR FORCE STATION, FLORIDA. THE HELIOS PROJECT IS EXPECTED TO PROVIDE NEW UNDERSTANDING OF FUNDAMENTAL SOLAR PROCESSES AND SUN/EARTH RELATIONSHIPS BY OBTAINING INFORMATION AND MEASUREMENTS ON THE SOLAR WIND, MAGNETIC AND ELECTRICAL FIELDS, COSMIC RAYS, COSMIC DUST, SOLAR DISC, AND A TEST OF THE THEORY OF GENERAL RELATIVITY. THE SCHEDULED LAUNCH DATE IS 15 JANUARY 1976 WITH LAUNCH OPPORTUNITIES EXTENDING TO 15 JANUARY 1976. THE ARIA WHICH HAVE STAGED FROM JAN SMUTS ON PREVIOUS MISSIONS ARE SPECIALLY CONFIGURED BOEING 707 AIRCRAFT DESIGNED TO RECEIVE TELEMETRY SIGNALS IN LOCATIONS NOT COVERED BY GROUND STATIONS. THE AIRBORNE TRACKING STATION CONCEPT WAS ORIGINALLY DESIGNED TO RECEIVE AND RETRANSMIT ASTRONAUT VOICE DURING CRITICAL FLIGHT PHASES AND TO RECORD TELEMETRY INFORMATION FROM THE APOLLO SPACECRAFT. THE ARIA NOW SUPPORT BOTH UNITED STATES AND OTHER COUNTRIES' SPACE LAUNCHES ON A WORLDWIDE BASIS. FOLLOWING THE HELIOS-B LAUNCH, THE ARIA WILL RECEIVE, RECORD, AND RETRANSMIT IN NEAR REAL-TIME, TELEMETRY SIGNALS AND SIGNIFICANT EVENTS FROM THE VEHICLE MAIN ENGINE AND SPACECRAFT MANEUVERS. LOCATION OF HELIOS-B TEST SUPPORT POSITIONS DICTATE THAT THE ARIA USE JAN SMUTS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT FOR MAXIMUM ACCESS. THESE SUPPORT POSITIONS ARE LOCATED FROM 1200NM EAST TO 300NM SOUTH-WEST OF JOHANNESBURG, DEPENDING ON LAUNCH DAY. ONE ADDITIONAL ARIA WILL TRANSIT JAN SMUTS ENROUTE TO PLAISANCE AIRPORT FOR STAGING FROM MAURITIUS. THE TEST SUPPORT POSITIONS OF THIS AIRCRAFT ARE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN AND CAN BE REACHED ONLY FROM PLAISANCE. ROBINSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INSTRUCTIONS, PRESS RELEASES, NEGOTIATIONS, MILITARY BASES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 29 DEC 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE303666
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: OASD/ISA/FMRA:SGOLDSMITH PM/ISO:RWMASSON
Enclosure: ///////////////////////////////////////
Executive Order: AS DECLASSIFY UPON COMPLETION OF NEGOTIATIONS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750449-0283
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751210/aaaaaihq.tel
Line Count: 95
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN PM
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 STATE 287011
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 JUN 2003 by KelleyW0>; APPROVED <24 OCT 2003 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESS GUIDANCE CONCERNING HELIOS-B PROGRAM
TAGS: MARR, SF, MP, LT, WZ, GC
To: PRETORIA
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006